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Public schools' April vacation will be shortened

Holyoke will shorten its April school vacation to just three days, the School Department announced last week.

Remote learning classes will not be held on Patriots Day this Monday, April 20, or on Tuesday and Wednesday. Classes will resume Thursday, April 23.

VACATION, 4



HCC plans 'epic celebrations' for 2020 graduation

In lieu of its traditional spring commencement ceremony at the MassMutual Center, Holyoke Community College will instead recognize the Class of 2020 with a virtual celebration in August and also invite graduates to walk across the stage next year with the Class of 2021.

"Every year, one of my most anticipated moments is commencement," HCC President Christina Royal said in

GRADUATION, 5

We want to hear your stories of staying at home

The Holyoke Sun wants to know how you're coping with the coronavirus closures and how they've changed all of our lives — no school, no work, social distancing and staying at home.

We can't meet our neighbors in the schoolyards, playing fields or workplaces of Holyoke, but we can all share a few snapshots of what life's

SHARE 5

Business for a benefit

Holyoke's Hazen Paper, Walter Drake switch to medical production

By Peter Spotts
pspotts@turley.com

As the city, region, and country continues to wrestle with the Covid-19 pandemic, some local businesses have retooled their efforts to provide items most needed to the front lines with hand sanitizer and personal protective equipment.

Hazen Paper Co. on South Water Street took advantage of its current use of ethanol to repurpose some of its resources to create bottles of hand sanitizer for internal and city use. A couple blocks away on Sargeant Street, Walter Drake Inc. put its creative power to design a face shield prototype and the tools needed to produce it.

"From Hazen's point of view, this is not a business. We produce sanitizer for our own use internally and also, we've made donations to the city and other local first responders. It's a fairly modest operation," said Hazen Paper President and Owner John Hazen. "We recognized that was obviously a problem for us internally. I've



Hazen Paper President and Owner John Hazen holds up some of the hand sanitizer made by the company. Hazen Paper has partnered with Silver Bear Distillery in Dalton to produce the sanitizer during the coronavirus outbreak.
Photo by Peter Spotts

got some pretty good chemists and biologists here, and I sort of gave them the assignment of coming up with our own in-house sanitizer."

Walter Drake President Joseph Feigen said that about two weeks before Gov. Charles Baker and local officials began closing schools, businesses and other gathering places, they began seeing the trends across the country and got to work

researching a way to help.

"It was clear there was a big problem, you could not miss it, and the PPE [personal protective equipment] issues were known 10 days before the governor shutdown. So, we're watching that and, all of us, what can we do to help?" Feigen said. "We looked at our core competencies and said, What can we do that we know our quality assurance and we

can do in highly competent, first-class quality way?"

Both companies hit upon their new product after experimenting with others.

For Hazen Paper, sanitizer was one of a couple ideas the company looked into. Hazen said they experimented with prototypes for face shields and it was not a good fit for their

See BENEFIT, page 12



Trinity Health New England plans to close three psychiatric wards at Providence Behavioral Health Hospital in Holyoke. Photo by Michael Ballway

Providence psychiatric inpatient units to close

By Shelby Macri
smacri@turley.com

Trinity Health New England plans to close its geriatric, adult and pediatric inpatient psychiatric units at Providence Behavioral Health Hospital.

The hospital on Route 5 in the Ingleside neighborhood of Holyoke has been slowly reducing the num-

ber of beds in the unit since the summer of last year, a union official said. Michelle Reardon, who works at Providence and is vice president of United Auto Workers Local 2322, said the hospital was originally licensed for 74 beds but has closed 12 already, leaving 62, of which only 37 are occupied.

See PROVIDENCE, page 5

Mental health important amid Covid-19 isolation

By Dalton Zbierski and Melina Bourdeau
thesun@turley.com

The dangers posed by the coronavirus pandemic threaten more than one's physical health. In the midst of a crisis, staying mentally well equally as important as being physically well.

Dr. James Levine, Ph.D., of James Levine & Associates in South Hadley, focuses his clinical interests on trauma, mental health, learning and behavior. While virtually tending to patients during the lockdown, Levine came to the conclusion that "social distancing" is a misused phrase.

"To me, socially distancing is actually a misnomer, because you're trying to stay socially connected but physically distant. For people who tend to turn inward and have an inclination to isolate themselves, this only exacerbates that, and for people who are extroverts, this is also very hard," said Levine. Isolation and social dis-

tancing can intensify feelings of dread, loneliness, and despair and, potentially, lead to lasting mental trauma. Left unaddressed, such trauma could manifest in addictions, alcoholism, domestic violence, child abuse, self-harm or other serious outcomes.

For that reason, Massachusetts Gov. Charlie Baker executed the "Order Expanding Access to Telehealth Services and to Protect Health Care Providers" on March 10, which enables the coverage of telehealth appointments. During the Covid-19 state of emergency, therefore, public and private insurances will cover behavioral health appointments conducted by phone, Facetime, Zoom, Skype or whatever platform is deemed appropriate.

In addition to private practices, Clinical & Support Options and Behavioral Health Network have expanded services to include teleservice for existing and new patients.

See HEALTH, page 13

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In The News

Application open for business grants

To help Holyoke businesses to meet the challenges of the coronavirus state of emergency, Mayor Alex Morse and Greater Holyoke Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Andréa Marion recently introduced the Covid-19 Holyoke Business Emergency Operations Grant Program.

The grant program is administered by the city of Holyoke Office for Community Development and the Greater Holyoke Chamber of Commerce, using Community Development Block Grant funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Funds should be used by businesses to help them remain open, retain employees, or adapt business operations remotely or online during the public health emergency. Grant funds can be used for equipment and technology, consultant fees, payroll, inventory, and rent and utilities, if attempts to have these costs modified or deferred have been unsuccessful. The funds cannot be used for the business owner's own salary or pay, personal purchases, paying off debts, or any items purchased before the grant is approved.

Businesses must meet one of the following HUD eligibility requirements:

- Owned by a low- or moderate-income household
- Employ full-time at least one full-time equivalent low- or moderate-income person

• Provide a service (like a restaurant or grocery store) in a primarily residential neighborhood where at least 51 percent of the residents are low- or moderate-income.

All applicants must be for-profit businesses located in Holyoke that were in operation as of Jan. 20, 2020.

Applications are available now; the first round of application reviews begins Friday, April 17. Applications will be reviewed weekly until all funds are committed. The review committee consists of representatives from the Greater Holyoke Chamber of Commerce, the city of Holyoke, and EforAll Holyoke.

A total of \$90,000 is available for business grants. While there is no specific maximum request amount, resources are extremely limited and the city will seek to maximize the community impact of this fund. More program details and an electronic application that can be completed online are available at covid19ghcc.wixsite.com/businessresources/funding.

For more information, contact Marion at andrea@holyokechamber.com, or Alicia Zoeller at the Holyoke Office of Community Development, zoellera@holyoke.org.

The Chamber of Commerce has also compiled a list of other resources for businesses during the coronavirus state of emergency, at covid19ghcc.wixsite.com/business-resources.

City, Comcast offer Internet for students

Holyoke's School Department, in partnership with the Mayor's Office, recently negotiated a contract with Comcast to provide six months of Internet access to families of Holyoke public school students who do not currently have at-home connectivity.

Signups are being taken now. Families who are interested should call the schools at 413-561-0862 (English) or 413-314-3560 (Spanish) to get a promotional code on or before April 30. A district representative will provide a code for signup, or will call back if a message is left.

Families of Holyoke public school students are eligible so long as they have not had Comcast service in the past 90 days. A previous restriction that barred families from accessing this benefit if they had outstanding debt with Comcast, the main sticking point in negotiations that lasted weeks, and was recently waived nationwide.

"We knew immediately that Internet access for families would be a big challenge for our students, and the debt requirement was a major hurdle, especially in these trying times," said Receiver-Superintendent Stephen Zrike. "I want to thank Mayor [Alex] Morse and the team in City Hall for helping to facilitate this agreement, which ensures access for many of our Holyoke students."

The service from Comcast, administered through its "Internet Essentials" program, will include 6 months of free access covered by the city, after which families can continue service month-to-month for \$9.95, or cancel the service to avoid billing. Families will also have access to reduced-cost computers at a rate of \$149.99, plus tax, and free Digital Literacy Training. Holyoke teachers will continue online programming for students as long as the schools remain closed.

"I am glad that we have found a temporary solution to support many families in Holyoke, yet access to reliable Internet can no longer be considered a luxury, but a basic service to be provided by public utilities.

The coronavirus pandemic has brought further light to the widening inequalities and lack of access in our community and around the country," said Morse. "Online education, work-from-home, telemedicine, and staying connected with friends and loved ones are not passing trends, they are part of our evolving reality. We will be continuing our conversations and planning efforts with the HG&E, HPS, and others on how we can develop a more permanent community-scale solution towards universal internet connectivity. I want to thank the teachers and staff of Holyoke Public Schools who are fighting the challenges of inequality every day, and I am grateful for their continued advocacy and support for their students and families."

For more information or to sign up, visit www.hps.holyoke.ma.us/2020/04/10/free-6-months-of-internet-service-for-eligible-hps-families.

Chromebooks available

As classes have shifted to the Internet, the School Department is lending Chromebook computers to all students who need one.

This free program is intended for families who do not have any device that students could use to do their online classwork. Those who already have a computer, laptop computer or tablet at home are encouraged to use their own devices.

Only one Chromebook is available per family, regardless of how many children are in the house.

At the end of last week, the schools had distributed more than 1,200 devices. Anyone who still needs a device should reach out to his or her child's teacher or principal, or call the School Department hotline 413-561-0862 (English) or 413-314-3560 (Spanish).

Families will be able to pick up their devices at Morgan School from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on April 22, 24 or 29. The device distribution will close at the end of April.

Holyoke Medical Center gets federal aid

U.S. Rep. Richard Neal, D-Springfield, last Friday applauded the allocation of \$30 billion in funding from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that was distributed to health care providers under the CARES Act Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund.

The funds, which include several millions of dollars for Holyoke and Springfield hospitals, are the first phase of the \$100 billion that was included in the CARES Act to support hospitals and health care providers on the front lines of the Covid-19 pandemic.

"Hospitals and other health care providers in Massachusetts are experiencing tremendous strain as they respond to the Covid-19 crisis and care for an

influx of extremely sick patients," said Neal, who is chairman of the House Committee on Ways and Means. "This infusion of federal funds will help providers stay afloat during the unprecedented coronavirus emergency and get the resources they need to keep frontline health care workers safe. I'm proud to have been an author of the CARES Act, and I will continue to support our state's health care providers as Congress crafts additional Covid-19 response legislation."

Across Massachusetts, \$841,425,120 was dispersed to 8,746 providers. Among the local recipients are Baystate Health with \$32,100,000; Mercy Medical Center, with \$5,700,000; and Holyoke Medical Center, with \$2,900,000.

Last week's turtle totals

Did you find Turley the Turtle in last week's edition of The Holyoke Sun? Turley appeared nine times.

Ed Trudeau found eight of them.

Be sure to look closely on every page of this week's paper! We'd like to recognize our most eagle-eyed readers — if you think you've found them all, email the number you counted, along with your name and town of residence, by noon Tuesday to thesun@turley.com.

Westfield State houses homeless HCC students

Holyoke Community College and Westfield State University will be partners in a state-sponsored pilot program that provides free campus housing and meal plans to students struggling with homelessness and food insecurity.

Westfield and HCC were the sixth college team chosen for the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education's Campus Housing Security pilot program, which matches a public university with a nearby community college to offer free room and board for up to five students.

Beginning with the spring 2020 semester, two first-year students from HCC, as well as a senior, junior and sophomore from Westfield State, have been living in a dormitory on the Westfield campus with full campus meal plans. The program also provides for free public transportation from Westfield to Holyoke, as well as case management services and other resources through the Shine Young Adult Housing Program in Springfield.

Although the arrangements have been complicated since the coronavirus outbreak, the governor's stay-at-home advisory and the transition to remote instruction at both colleges, the students remain housed on the Westfield campus.

The program started last year with the pairing of Bridgewater State University and Massasoit Community College; Framingham State University and MassBay Community College; Worcester State University and Quinsigamond Community College; and UMass-Lowell and Middlesex Community College.

This year two more college teams were added: Salem State University and North Shore Community College, and Westfield State and HCC.



Westfield State University President Ramon Torrecilha and Holyoke Community College President Christina Royal are pictured together in January 2019. Submitted photo

"An unfortunate byproduct of growing income inequality in Massachusetts is the rise of hunger and homelessness among our students," said Carlos E. Santiago, the state's commissioner of higher education. "I am thrilled to see the expansion of our pilot program to serve this vulnerable population and commend our campus leaders for committing resources to fund meal plans and offer academic supports that will increase the likelihood that these students succeed in earning college credentials."

The goal of the program is to help struggling students gain stability in their lives so they can complete their college degrees and make a successful transition

to permanent housing and meaningful careers.

"A lot of people are surprised to hear that housing insecurity and homelessness are a reality on many college campuses," said HCC President Christina Royal. "In order for our students to succeed academically, we must address some of the challenges they face with their basic needs. This partnership with Westfield will provide stability for these students so they can focus on their studies."

The state is providing \$48,000 per regional campus team to cover the cost for five beds in a university residence hall, with additional block grant funding from the Department of Higher

Education to cover any remaining housing costs.

Each participating institution covers the cost of its own students' meal plans, which for the two HCC students is being paid by the HCC Foundation, the college's nonprofit fundraising corporation. The five students will also continue to live on the Westfield campus during vacation breaks and summer months. To be eligible for the program, they must be enrolled full-time and be in good academic standing.

"We are proud to help address an increasing societal issue by assisting some students with housing and meals on campus through this thoughtful, state-initiated program," said Gloria Lopez, vice president for student affairs at Westfield State. "We are fortunate and pleased that we are able to accommodate these students, as we eagerly welcome them to our supportive learning environment and inclusive campus community."

According to the Department of Higher Education, Massachusetts is the first state to address these issues as a matter of intentional, state-level public policy, thanks to a unique partnership among the Department of Higher Education, Department of Housing and Community Development, and Executive Office of Health and Human Services. Through its Commission on Unaccompanied Homeless Youth, EOHHS is funding the annual stipends to cover the cost of dorm housing for up to five community college and state university students at six residential campuses.

A seventh pilot program, launched in fall 2019, provides off-campus, single-room occupancy for up to 11 homeless students attending public colleges and universities within the city of Boston.

Schools receive \$10K grant to continue free meal distribution

To support families during school closures, Holyoke is providing local children with free, nutritious breakfast and lunch meals every day of the week as part of the USDA's emergency Covid-19 response. The Eos Foundation recently awarded the School Department a \$10,000 grant to support the continued distribution of meals to children.

"We want everyone to know that these healthy meals are available to every Holyoke child. In fact, parents [and] caregivers can pick up meals on children's behalf to help ensure safe social distancing," said Receiver-Superintendent Stephen Zrike. "We are extremely grateful to the Eos Foundation

for their generosity. Home food supplies are running low and it's important to try to keep people out of the supermarkets. This is a federally funded program, and the food is nutritious, so please come, take your meals!"

The district offers meals at six school sites in the city, from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays:

- Donahue School, 210 Whiting Farms Road.
- Holyoke High School, North Campus, 500 Beech St.
- Kelly School, 216 West St.
- Lawrence School, 156 Cabot St.
- Morgan School, 596 S. Bridge St.

- Sullivan School, 400 Jarvis Ave.

Each day, children (or parents and guardians on behalf of children) can pick up multiple bagged meals per child, including two breakfasts and two lunches on Monday and Wednesday, so that each student is covered for breakfast and lunch Monday-Thursday; and three breakfasts and three lunches on Fridays, to cover both that day and the weekend.

Children do not need to be present for their parents or guardians to pick up the meals. All sites encourage safe social distancing and ask that individuals remain 6 feet apart.

Those who cannot make it out of their house to pick up a meal are encour-

aged to contact Jose Bou, the School Department's equity, family and community partnerships manager, at 413-534-2000, ext. 1104, or jbou@hps.holyoke.ma.us.

"We are proud to help support the great work of Tim Gray, the Holyoke school nutrition director, and his team," said Andrea Silbert, president of the Eos Foundation. "They are front-lines heroes, ensuring distribution of nutritious meals for children at this unprecedented time."

The Eos Foundation is a private philanthropic foundation committed to fighting hunger, poverty, and promoting education and gender and racial equity in Massachusetts.

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Patrick Burns, volunteer, and Luis Morales from Sodexo, stand with donated meals to benefit the Weekend Backpack nutrition program for Holyoke students. Submitted photo

Schools receive meal donations

The Holyoke schools' Weekend Backpack program recently received a donation of 10,000 meals from The Outreach Program.

Volunteers traveled to Eastern Massachusetts last week to pick up the donated meals. All food was distributed to students through the weekend backpack program.

School administrators thanked Jenny Adamczyk and Mike Clark of Providence Ministries for facilitating the use of their truck; volunteers Christine and Patrick Burns, who did the pickup; and Mathew Martin, regional director of The Outreach Program, for contacting Holyoke about food availability.

Masks advised for all, Covid-19 test sites open

Massachusetts' Department of Public Health last week advised that all residents wear a mask or face covering whenever social distancing is not possible, and invited public safety and food workers to use two free priority Covid-19 testing sites, one of which is at the Big E in West Springfield.

Gov. Charlie Baker's stay-at-home advisory remains in effect, urging Massachusetts residents to avoid any non-essential trips outside the home. The mask advisory, which is consistent with federal Centers for Disease Control guidelines, covers situations where people are out in public for essential reasons and proper social distancing measures are not possible, such as in a grocery store. Residents are asked to wear any face covering that covers the nose and mouth; a cloth mask, a scarf or a bandana. Health care masks, such as N95 masks, should not be used for these purposes. These medical-grade masks should be reserved for first responders and healthcare workers.

Cloth masks should not be worn by young children under the age of 2 years, persons with difficulty breathing or those who are unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.

Testing site

The state Executive Office of Public Safety and Security is offering free, priority Covid-19 testing sites for work-

ers in several critical professions at two sites, Gillette Stadium in Foxborough and the Eastern States Exposition fairgrounds at 1305 Memorial Ave., West Springfield. Each site can perform up to 200 tests per day and will operate seven days a week with drive-through service. Testing is performed at no cost; patients do not need to have symptoms to be tested.

Those eligible for the tests include police, fire, EMS and corrections officers, public safety dispatchers, active-duty National Guard members performing critical public safety functions, mortuary service providers, and supermarket and grocery workers. Eligible patients should contact their supervisor to schedule a test appointment.

Guard activated

Last week, the governor also activated an additional 3,000 members of the Massachusetts National Guard to support the state's coronavirus response, bringing the total number activated to 5,000. National Guard members will support state agencies with equipment, logistics, warehousing and related duties. Cities and towns may also submit requests for National Guard assistance.

Residents may visit www.mass.gov/covid19 for the latest information, call 2-1-1 with questions, or text "COVIDMA" to 888-777 to subscribe to text-alert updates.

Local children's author on 'Must Read' longlist

Holyoke resident Lesléa Newman is a candidate for the 2020 Massachusetts Book Award in picture book and early readers, for her book "Gittel's Journey."

Newman's book is one of 12 on the "Must Read" longlist for the award. Her book tells the story of a young girl's solo journey to America through Ellis Island, based on Newman's own grandmother's experience. The book is enhanced by illustrations.

The book awards, given by the Massachusetts Center for the Book, recognize works by Massachusetts authors published in the preceding calendar year. For each category, a winner and two honors titles will be awarded in August.

Also on the longlist in the picture book and early readers category are "Because," by Mo Willems; "Daniel's Good Day," by Micha Archer; "Eek, You Reek!" by Jane Yolen and Heidi

E.Y. Stemple; "Follow Chester!" by Gloria Respress-Churchwell; "Here and Now," by Julia Denos; "The Hundred-Year Barn," by Patricia MacLachlan; "Linus the Little Yellow Pencil," by Scott Magoon; "Monument Maker," by Linda Booth Sweeney; "Tiny Feet Between the Mountains," by Hanna Cha; "Vamos! Let's Go to the Market," by Raúl the Third; and "What Miss Mitchell Saw," by Hayley Barrett.

Book awards will also be given in the categories of fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and middle grade and young adult literature.

"In the midst of a public health crisis, we take heart that we can announce another exciting year for Massachusetts



Lesléa Newman

writing," said Sharon Shaloo, executive director of the Massachusetts Center for the Book. "These awards confirm the strength and vitality of our extensive community of authors and illustrators working in our academic and literary economies. We look forward to promoting the longlists in every way we can throughout the spring and summer."

The Massachusetts Center for the Book is a public-private partnership, chartered as the state's affiliate of the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress, and charged with developing, supporting and promoting cultural programming to advance the cause of books and reading. For more information, visit massbook.org or call 617-872-3718.

Realty office honors Herbert as top agent

WEST SPRINGFIELD

Ericca Herbert of Holyoke was recently named one of the top producing agents for the first quarter of 2020 for the West Springfield office of Park Square Realty.



Ericca Herbert

Ted Cassell, president of Park Square Realty and manager of the West Springfield office, congratulated Herbert as a sales leader for January, February and March of this year. Also named top agents were Tim Coughlen and Dee Cyr. Top agents from the Westfield office were Duane Desilets, Tom O'Connor and Aimee Tompkins.

For more information about Park Square Realty, call 413-789-9830 or visit parksquarerealty.com. The locally-owned company has 50 agents and two locations.

Baystate gives tips for talking about virus with children

Keep it simple. Stick to the facts.

That's the word when it comes to calming a child's fears about what they are hearing about the coronavirus pandemic.

"Concern over coronavirus Covid-19 can make children and families anxious. Acknowledging some level of concern, without panicking, is appropriate and can result in taking actions that reduce the risk of illness," said Dr. Bruce Waslick, chief of child psychiatry at Baystate Health.

"Helping children cope with anxiety and stress requires being attentive to the child's emotional needs as much as providing accurate prevention information and facts without causing undue alarm," he added.

Waslick noted that it is important to remember that children look to adults for guidance on how to react to stressful events.

"If parents seem overly worried, children's anxiety may rise to the point of being unhealthy. Parents should reassure children that health and school offi-

cials are working hard to ensure that people throughout the country stay healthy," Waslick said.

However, children also need factual, age-appropriate information about the potential seriousness of disease risk and concrete instruction about how to avoid infection and the spread of disease.

"Teaching children positive coping measures, talking with them about their fears and giving them a sense of some control over their risk of infection can help reduce anxiety," said Waslick.

He offered the following strategies for parents with children.

Remain calm and reassuring: Children will react to and follow parents' verbal and nonverbal reactions. What they say and do about Covid-19, current prevention efforts, and related events can either increase or decrease their children's anxiety. They should let children talk about their feelings and help reframe their concerns into the appropriate perspective.

Be available: Children may need extra attention from their parents and

may want to talk about their concerns, fears, and questions. It is important that they know they have someone who will listen to them, so parents should make time for them. They should tell their children they love them and give them plenty of affection.

Monitor their media: Parents should limit television viewing or access to sensational information on the Internet and through social media. Parents themselves should try to avoid watching or listening to information that might be upsetting when children are present.

Keep them busy: Parents should engage their children in games or other interesting activities, and maintain a normal routine to the extent possible.

Be honest and accurate: In the absence of factual information, children often imagine situations far worse than reality. Parents shouldn't ignore their concerns, but rather explain that at the present moment, relatively few people in this country are sick with Covid-19.

For more information, visit baystate-health.org/covid19.

VACATION, from page 1

This decision means that the last day of school for the year, whether or not the schools return to in-person classes, will be Friday, June 19.

"This approach allows us to balance the need to maintain our remote learning routines and our connections with students, while also providing an opportunity for students, families and staff to recharge and focus on their health and wellness," Receiver-Superintendent Stephen Zrike said in a statement.

Local insurance agency moves in with Chamber

Rewarding Insurance Agency owners Miguel Rivera and Lidia Rodriguez recently announced their new office, within the Greater Holyoke Chamber of Commerce at 177 High St. in downtown Holyoke. Rivera and Rodriguez have 10 years of shared experience protecting families, individuals and businesses financially in Massachusetts and Connecticut.

"We are proud to be able to open our offices to serve our more than 500 clients from Holyoke and surrounding towns from where we help our clients evaluate their options, review their policies and process their claims," said Rivera, co-owner and member of the Chamber's Latino Business Committee.

Chamber Executive Director Andréa Marion added: "It is wonderful to have Rewarding Insurance Agency within our office. We see an abundance of folks

coming to us looking to start a business in Holyoke, many of them Latino. Insurance is a huge part of operating a business and it's a perfect match and opportunity for everyone. We look forward to seeing their business flourish and new businesses opening in our community because of them."

Rewarding Insurance Agency offers customers a wide range of products, including: income replacement, foreclosure protection and notary services. For more information, email RewardingInsuranceAgency@gmail.com or call 413-317-0043. They are on Facebook.com and Instagram as "RewardingAgency."

At this time, only virtual consultations are available. When the coronavirus state of emergency is lifted, the agency will be open on High Street from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays.



Lidia Rodriguez and Miguel Rivera are co-owners of Rewarding Insurance Agency, which recently moved to Chamber of Commerce office on High Street in Holyoke. *Submitted photo*

PROVIDENCE, from page 1

"They have capped the number of patients that we can take in the in-patient units, and we can definitely help more people." Reardon said. "There aren't any other in-house beds in Massachusetts at this time. Many other inpatient units are closing, and have been for a while."

Trinity Health spokesman Mary Orr said the hospital has faced serious challenges regarding psychiatric coverage for several years, as over the past two years there have been persistent provider shortages.

"While licensed for 74 inpatient psychiatry beds, the hospital has regularly operated at less than 60 beds and at times closer to 40 beds over the past two years," Orr said. "Unfortunately, the provider shortage has reached a critical point where it is going to prevent our future ability to provide safe, quality care to our patients."

In the past 10 years, there have been at least 27 closures of hospitals or inpatient mental health units in Massachusetts, Reardon said. At least nine of the cases were considered as "essential services" by the state Department of Public Health, but allowed to close anyway. It's getting harder for mental health patients to find proper care without having to travel to Boston, she said.

"Our biggest concern right now is our patients, and wondering where they'll be able to get service," Reardon said. "Our geriatric patients will end up in units or programs where people don't know how to properly help with dementia or Alzheimer's disease."

Reardon said the loss of services for younger patients will shift the burden to schools. In the hospital setting, such mental illnesses as anxiety, depression, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder can be treated with staff members' full attention; that's not true in the schools, said Reardon, where the main focus is on learning.

Reardon said she's also concerned about the number of jobs that will be lost, the three units closing consists of two and a half floors and is expected to eliminate about 200 jobs. This includes about half of the 115 counselors, clinicians, and aides on the site; as well as nurses, dietary crew, maintenance, cleaning crew and more.

"This is a big deal, it will affect a lot of areas and a lot of people," Reardon said. "They haven't given us a clear transition plan for patients and they say they're working on it, but they haven't told us anything yet."

Orr said Trinity Health will offer referrals to other hospitals and partner with other local resources.

"Through collaboration with our community and system partners and the enhancement of our clinical assessment center, we are working to efficiently match what patients need with the available resources for both inpatient and outpatient," Orr said.

One patient's mother, who asked that the newspaper not use her name to protect the anonymity of her daughter, said Providence provides a vital service in the community.

"As the parent of a teenager who needs this service, this closure will be absolutely detrimental to us," said the mother. "I've been through this whole journey with my daughter, and we've been in hospital ER units that weren't properly staffed or supplied for her — and other patients' — needs."

She said she was required to stay with her daughter for 24 hours a day, so she went through and witnessed everything along her daughter's journey. After being in the ER for 96 hours, and searching for open inpatient beds the whole time, the

Massachusetts Department of Mental Health steps in and extends the search statewide, the mother said. Initially, they still couldn't find an inpatient bed. She said finding Providence Hospital was a blessing.

She's concerned about having to find another inpatient program, and having to bear the cost and time commitment of travel outside the Pioneer Valley.

Orr said the plan is for inpatient beds and inpatient psychiatric services at Providence Hospital to be discontinued as of June 30, though substance use disorder services will continue. This includes the Acute Treatment Service that helps with detoxification, the Clinical Stabilization Service that helps with post-detoxification, and an intensive outpatient program and a methadone clinic.

Reardon, along with other staff members, wondered if the substance abuse unit, which shares the third floor with the geriatric unit, would be expanded so staff could help more people in that area.

"We were told that we have good ideas, suggestions, and questions, but there's been no update or further information," Reardon said.

Orr said Trinity Health is evaluating the long-term usage of the facility, but has not made any decisions about the building.

Women to Watch reschedules events

The Western Massachusetts chapter of Women to Watch USA has made changes to its spring event schedule in response to the coronavirus pandemic.

Nominations for the annual Top 25 Women Watch in Western Massachusetts have been extended to April 30. Nominations are open to the public and available at www.women2watchusawestma.com.

The public voting for the nominees will take place May 1-31. There are 23 categories available where people can nominate their favorite businesswoman who has made a difference not only in her business but also in her community.

Winners will be announced in June and the awards dinner will take place Oct. 22 at the Log Cabin in Holyoke.

Continuing Education Women's Scholarship applications are available at local colleges, universities and specialty schools. Any woman who has gone back to school and is over the age of 21, and is currently enrolled in an area educational facility, is eligible. For information, contact Women to Watch Scholarship Chairman Tracy Viola at Tracysellsrealestate@comcast.net.

For more information or to join the chapter, visit www.women2watchusawestma.com.

GRADUATION, from page 1

an email to students last Friday. "As a first-generation college student, I remember how significant commencement was for my family and me. I take great pride in joining you and your families in celebrating your achievements, and in shaking each of your hands as you walk across the stage. But as we have all seen, the rapid spread of Covid-19 has changed nearly everything. It's no surprise that we will not be able to host this event in person on May 30, 2020."

She continued: "We must balance our desire to celebrate your academic achievements in all the ways you were expecting with the need to keep our community healthy, which continues to be our highest priority."

The new plan is for HCC to hold a virtual celebration in August, complete with special remarks, honors and recognition of graduates. All members of

the Class of 2020 will receive a special surprise package in the mail during the summer and be invited to host their own celebrations to share through videos and photos using the hashtag #HolyokeCC20.

The exact date for the virtual celebration has not yet been determined.

Also, Royal said, "The Class of 2020 will have a traditional commencement in May 2021, where we will celebrate each of you, in person with your loved ones present, along with the Class of 2021, on what will be a truly historic day."

"Your perseverance toward graduation in these unprecedented times deserves to be celebrated in every way possible," she said. "On behalf of your faculty and the entire HCC community, I applaud you for your strength and resilience, and will look forward to seeing you virtually in August and at the Mass Mutual Center in May 2021. What epic celebrations these will be!"

SHARE, from page 1

like with the kids in the house and the home office working overtime. Take a minute to send in an update on how you're doing, what fun enrichment activities the kids have been up to, or anything else that's made the past two weeks a special time in your home. Include full names of the writer or photographer, and anyone visible in each photo. We'll print the best entries in next week's newspaper, and in subsequent weeks as the state

of emergency continues. The best way to contact us is at thesun@turley.com.

We would also be glad to publish Holyoke children's artwork, essays or photos created during the school closure. Include the creator's full name, age, and school attended.

For all submissions, also include a telephone number and email address. We won't publish this information, but may use it to verify identities or ask follow-up questions.

Stay safe out there — and let us know how you're doing!

CHECK OUT ALL THE

Turley Publications

www.newspapers.turley.com

Editorial

Keep them equipped for emergency

Adept, brave, caring, diligent: four adjectives from the first four letters to the alphabet, each one describing first responders and medical professionals.

Add a fifth: Equipped. There's not much that we mere mortals can do to relieve the strain on our doctors, nurses and paramedics, but we can at least do everything we can to ensure they have the supplies they need to apply their skills safely.

When we think about the people who save our lives in times of need, we tend to think of what they do and how they behave. We praise them for their knowledge and their willingness to put themselves in danger or discomfort for our sake. We thank them for their professionalism and their empathy.

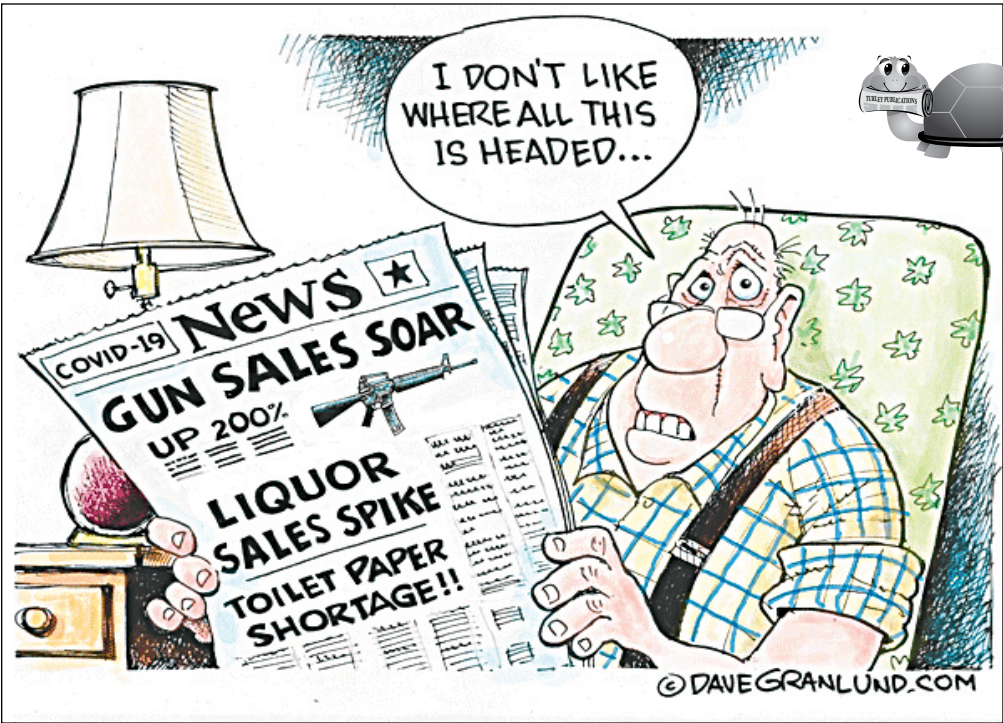
What we don't often think about — until a prolonged state of emergency like this one points it out — is the boring but painstaking preparation that goes into every ambulance run, every emergency surgery, even every routine blood test. For all the advances in surgical technique and pharmaceutical innovation, for all the millions of dollars spent on ICU and ambulance equipment, two of the greatest improvements in medical treatment in the modern age are sterilization and protective equipment. The importance of doctors, nurses and paramedics keeping patients from being infected while under treatment — and keeping themselves from being infected, so they can continue saving lives — is hard to dispute but often ignored.

This coronavirus state of emergency, now in its second month in Massachusetts, is stretching stockpiles of protective equipment to the limit. Just as ordinary residents are being advised to wear cloth masks or bandanas when they go out, caregivers are donning medical-grade N95 masks to protect themselves and their patients. And these doctors, nurses and paramedics are working full shifts, if not more. They need even more supplies than usual.

In the past week, schools, businesses and residents have responded to this need. College science and pre-medical departments have been donating their equipment to the professionals. Around the Pioneer Valley, schools and individuals are using 3D printers to produce shield frames and other supplies. Right here in Holyoke, manufacturers are retooling to produce face masks, ventilators and other medical supplies needed on the front lines of Covid-19 treatment.

More of us can help. The Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency recently

See EQUIPPED, page 7



Letters to the Editor

Parade organizers thank community

I am writing on behalf of the St. Patrick's Committee of Holyoke Inc., in order to express our sincere thanks and grateful appreciation to so many individuals and organizations throughout the greater Holyoke area and beyond.

Once the painful, but correct, decision was made to cancel or postpone all of the St. Patrick's Parade-related events that were to have taken place between this past March 10 and March 22, the outpouring of support and encouragement that our Parade Committee received was nothing short of overwhelming! While our disappointment was great, we realize that so many others shared that same sense that something that

has become extraordinarily significant to all of our communities was "missing" this past March. We continue to take comfort in the fact that our committee will have the opportunity to organize many wonderful events for our 2021 parade season, culminating in our nationally recognized 45th annual Road Race and our 69th annual St. Patrick's Parade next March — in our 70th year!

Thank you, and please stay safe in these challenging times.

Marc E. Joyce
2020-2021 president, St. Patrick's Committee of Holyoke Inc.

Commentary

Looking for ways we can all help in this crisis

By Elise Linscott

Irecently came across a quote from Mr. Fred Rogers that felt particularly relevant: "When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, 'Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.'"

There are scary things in the news these days. But we don't need to feel powerless, and there are plenty of ways we can help support each other and ourselves in turn.

Some of the first images that come to mind when I think of people helping today are the ones we're seeing from the front lines: healthcare workers sacrificing their time, their proximity with family, and sometimes their lives, to help fight the spread of this disease. Essential workers have been

putting in overtime at grocery stores and assisted living facilities, and large organizations have been donating funds to help smaller ones stay afloat.

It's been shown that helping others gives our brains a dopamine rush, in turn contributing to our own sense of well-being. And there are plenty of ways to help each other right now, even for those of us who aren't on the front lines fighting the pandemic.

One small way might be to tip extra. This goes a long way for restaurants and business owners who are afraid of shuttering. For anyone with a sewing machine, making face masks is another.

If you have canned food and non-perishables, consider donating them to a food

See HELP page 7



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A Quote

OF NOTE

"We wanted to help the people that were having a problem."

Joseph Feigen,
president of
Walter Drake Inc.

Letters to the Editor Policy

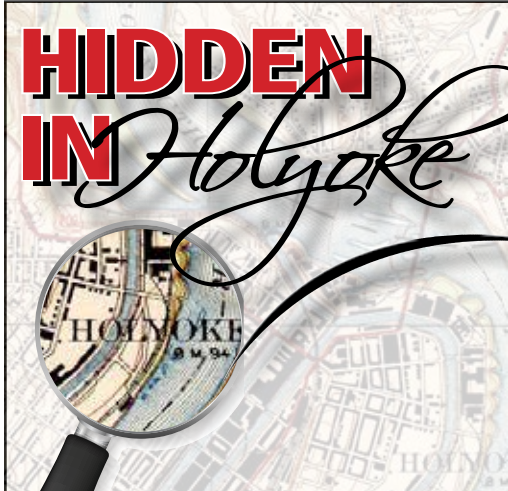
Letters to the Editor have a maximum of 350 words. We require writers to include their name, address and phone number in order for our office to authenticate authorship prior to publication. Addresses and phone numbers are not published.

Unsigned or anonymous letters will NOT be published.

We reserve the right to edit or withhold any submissions. Libelous, unsubstantiated allegations, personal attacks or defamation of character are not allowed.

Deadline for submissions is Wednesday at noon.

Please email (preferred) letters to thesun@turley.com. Mailed letters can be sent to The Sun, 24 Water Street, Palmer, MA 01069.



Each week, The Holyoke Sun will feature a photo of a distinctive place, landmark, sculpture, sign or other recognizable object located somewhere in the city.

Think you know what or where it is? Readers are encouraged to submit their guesses to "Hidden in Holyoke" via email to TheSun@Turley.com. In order to qualify for the weekly contest, entries must be received by Wednesday at noon for inclusion into Friday's edition. Please include your full name with your guess in an email to TheSun@turley.com. If more than one correct answer is received, the names of all those who submitted guesses will be listed. For more information, contact The Holyoke Sun at 413-283-8398.

Last week's "Hidden in Holyoke" was the Campus Center at Holyoke Community College. It was correctly guessed by Don Diller and Alice and Dexter Gess, Ed Trudeau, Fred and Paul Wanat, and Jay Whelihan.

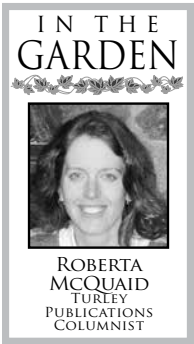
The spotlight is on early bloomers

For years I drove by this particular house on my way to work, and every April I admired a “sea” of tiny blue flowers growing in the lawn. They literally stopped traffic for a few weeks each spring then disappeared.

The tiny blue flower are Siberian squill (Scilla siberica). Singularly they are not much to speak of, but when planted en masse, they really stand out against the backdrop of a green lawn. Each mature bulb produces three or four stems of drooping royal blue flowers not more than 4” tall. Leaves are blade-like, a bit thicker than those of grass, blending in nicely with it after flowers fade. The bulbs themselves are quite small, so planting them is easy. Simply take a trowel and stab at the ground, pulling back a bit of earth. Sprinkle some well-balanced organic fertilizer into the divot and insert the bulb pointed side up, two to three inches deep, then close the hole.

Over time, Siberian squill will multiply in numbers by offshoots and seed. For a nice showing early on, be prepared to plant at least a couple of hundred. Remember too, that bulb foliage needs to ripen before it is removed, so hold off on mowing the lawn until it has yellowed. The lawn isn’t the only place where Siberian squill are at home- try groupings of seven to nine in a perennial garden for a splash of early color. They look great in my mom’s garden and return effortlessly year after year.

Another plant at home in the perennial garden is the primrose. They are plentiful at florist shops and nurseries this time of year. With any luck you may



have even received one as an Easter gift. Even though they are usually sold in small pots, it’s hard to miss their brightly colored flowers poking up through basal foliage. They come in almost every color of the rainbow.

Many types of primrose make great garden plants; check the label to make sure the one you purchase is hardy before planting it outdoors. I

have had a clump of primroses blooming for years now that started out as a potted plant. After enjoying it indoors, let it harden off a bit before planting it in the ground; a partly shady spot with moisture retentive soil is best. Mom’s garden has a number of primroses in it too.

Typically they need to be divided every three years or so, evident by die-out that begins in the center of the plant. Simply separate a chunk from the outer portion of the plant and replant it in rejuvenated soil. I prefer to do this early in the season but it can also be accomplished right after flowering has ended. In the heat of the summer, and especially in drier soils, the plant can look a little yellow and ragged. Keeping it well watered helps.

Expect blooms by the end of this month; they look particularly nice alongside late tulips and daffodils!

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For the last 28 years, she has held the position of staff horticulturalist at Old Sturbridge Village. She enjoys growing food as well as flowers. Have a question for her? Email it to ekennedy@turley.com with “Gardening Question” in the subject line.



HELP, from page 6

pantry, many of which are in dire need of food and financial contributions right now. Some local Meals on Wheels organizations have also been recruiting back-up drivers to avoid any service interruptions and to help get food to more house-bound seniors.

If you’ve considered getting a pet, or have space in your home for another, fostering is a great way to help both the animals and the shelters. Most shelters are still operating, often with greatly reduced staffing and hours and opening for adoptions and surrenders by appointment only.

Another easy way to make a difference is by reaching out to people you care about. It can feel lonely when we’re isolating at home and not able to see each other in person; I imagine that elderly people, who already experience higher levels of loneliness than other age groups, must be feeling that especially strong right now. Calling, writing cards and sending care packages are little gestures that can go a long way in helping

people feel connected and loved.

Checking in with someone who’s having a tough time and offering some validation, acknowledging their fear or grief and providing a little hopeful statement — something like, “I know this is really difficult; I’m here for you and I believe in you” — can also help comfort someone without overpromising. When I hear phrases like, “Don’t worry, everything will be fine,” that can feel dismissive and overly hopeful, because in reality no one knows if everything will be fine. But feeling heard and understood, and hearing words of genuine hope and encouragement back, can feel soothing and supportive.

As I’m writing this, I’m looking out the front window of my house, watching a boy and his mother walk down the street with their dog while picking up garbage and collecting it in a pail.

The bottom line: there are a myriad of ways to make a difference, both for ourselves and for others, and they all help make our communities stronger.

Elise Linscott is an editor with Turley Publications.

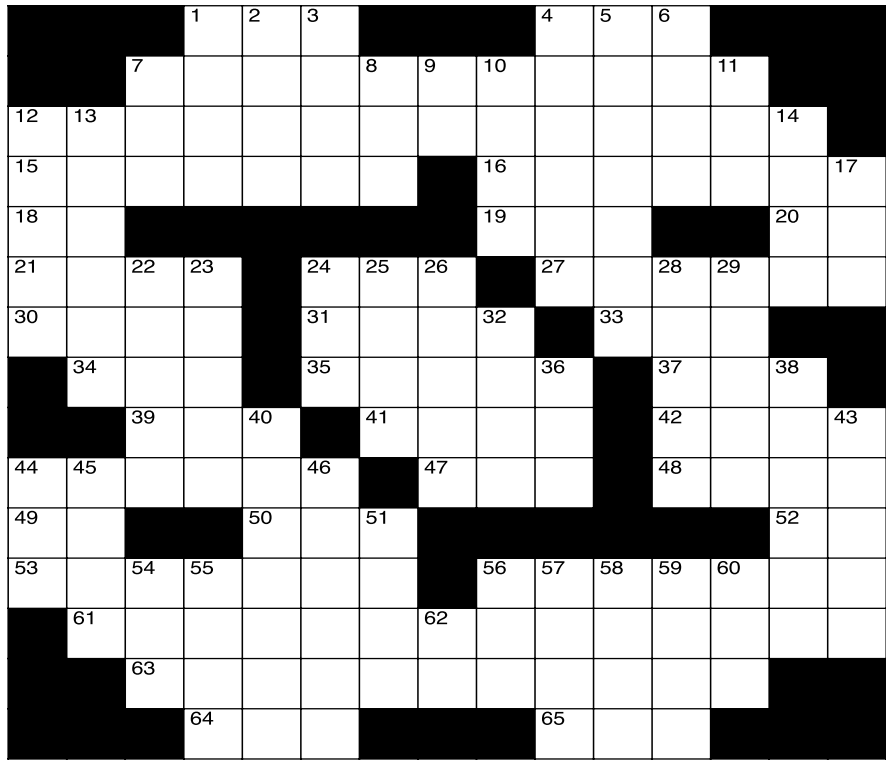
EQUIPPED, from page 6

put out a call for anyone with protective equipment to sell or donate it. MEMA is looking for surgical masks, N95 masks, face shields, ventilators, goggles, gloves, gowns, protective suits, booties or shoe covers, head covers, hand sanitizer, sanitizing wipes, alcohol wipes and gallons of bleach. Anyone who has these items in bulk should visit www.mass.gov/forms/covid-19-donation-program or massgov.formstack.com/forms/procurement_form. Items donated to the state will be forwarded to the state agencies or local hos-

pitals, nursing homes, community clinics, public safety agencies, ambulance services and boards of health that have the greatest immediate need.

Every day, while the rest of us do our best to limit our exposure to Covid-19, first responders and medical professionals go out into the world to treat everyone who needs their help, including people infected with this deadly virus. We should do all we can to make sure that they, too, can stay as safe as possible.

Tell us what you think. Send letters to the editor to thesun@turley.com.



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Germanic mythological god
- 4. Cash machine
- 7. Improvement
- 12. What voters want
- 15. Sheepish
- 16. Placed at powerful level
- 18. Measure of illumination
- 19. Trent Reznor’s band
- 20. Commercial
- 21. Amounts of time
- 24. English broadcaster
- 27. Rolls of tobacco
- 30. Position
- 31. Expresses pleasure
- 33. Corporate exec (abbr.)
- 34. Body part
- 35. Bleated
- 37. Businessman
- 39. Beats per minute
- 41. Defunct Italian

- monetary unit
- 42. Broken branch
- 44. Put in advance
- 47. Arrest
- 48. Prefix indicating adjacent to
- 49. Artificial intelligence
- 50. Disfigure
- 52. The Fighting Irish (abbr.)
- 53. Not in any place
- 56. Predict
- 61. A system of getting stuff from one place to another
- 63. Philosophy of the principles of things
- 64. US gov’t office (abbr.)
- 65. Seaborgium’s former name (abbr.)

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Network connector
- 2. Primordial matter

- 3. Get up
- 4. Uncoordinated
- 5. Ill-fated cruise ship
- 6. Work hard
- 7. Drivers’ speed
- 8. Largest English dictionary (abbr.)
- 9. Healthcare pro
- 10. Egyptian Sun god
- 11. Expresses the negative
- 12. Some are three-legged
- 13. Clothing manufacturer
- 14. Close by
- 17. Tooth caregiver
- 22. Housing material
- 23. Flows through
- 24. Founder of Babism
- 25. Honorific title
- 26. A type of letter
- 28. Seize and hold firmly
- 29. Artery

- 32. Body fluids
- 36. Press against lightly
- 38. An island in the Pacific
- 40. A reminder of past events
- 43. Austrian spa town
- 44. Peter’s last name
- 45. Something a mob might do
- 46. Of the bones of the feet
- 51. “Amazing Stories” writer
- 54. Nazi-resistant youth group (abbr.)
- 55. Used to have (Scottish)
- 56. A way to cook
- 57. Japanese port city
- 58. Type of precipitation
- 59. Engrave
- 60. Female sibling
- 62. Expresses emotion

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CROSSWORD ANSWER on page 13

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In The News

Income tax deadlines pushed out to July 15, corporate fees waived

BOSTON – The Baker-Polito administration released guidance regarding the extension of the 2019 state individual income tax filing and payment deadline from April 15 to July 15 due to the COVID-19 outbreak, and announced that the Department of Revenue (DOR) will waive any late-file and late-pay penalties for corporate excise returns and payments due April 15 that are filed and paid by July 15.

This guidance, publicized in the form of a Technical Information Release (TIR) from DOR, clarifies that the extension for personal income taxpayers applies to 2019 returns and payments as well as the first installment of estimated tax due April 15. The second installment of estimated tax due June 15 will also now be due July 15.

The extension of the personal income tax return deadline is being implemented pursuant to legislation and applies to personal income tax, estate and trust income tax, and income tax due with a partnership composite return with an April 15 due date. It also applies to an April 2020 tax installment owed by a personal income taxpayer with respect to deemed repatriated income. Taxpayers that have previously filed their 2019 returns but have not yet made the associated payments have until July 15 to make such payments.

Additionally, DOR will waive late-file and late-pay penalties for corporate excise (including financial institution and insurance premiums excise) returns and payments until July 15. The waiver of penalties applies to corporate excise returns and payments with an original due date of April 15, including those of certain S corporations and non-profits that file on a fiscal-year basis and have tax returns and payments due April 15.

This income tax relief is automatic, and taxpayers do not need to file any additional forms to qualify.

Individuals and companies with questions or concerns regarding taxes can contact the Massachusetts Department of Revenue at 617-887-6367 or send a secure e-message through MassTaxConnect.

We would like to thank our customers and employees for their loyalty and cooperation during these challenging times. Pricing and availability for fresh meat is still unstable, but we continue to try hard everyday to bring you quality products at the best available prices. As always we have a wide variety and selection of Frozen Products available at a great value everyday. We wish everyone good health!

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		USDA INSP. FRESH AMERICAN LEG LAMB	\$3⁹⁹ lb
		USDA INSP. FRESH BONELESS BEEF EYE ROUND	\$3⁹⁹ lb
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 Lending a hand might mean washing yours.
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As a community bank, we're pledging to support those around us in new ways. If you find yourself experiencing financial difficulties due to COVID-19, please reach out to our Customer Care Center at **800-322-8233**, or visit countrybank.com/COVID19 for more information.

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PVIAC preparing for possible spring season

By Gregory A. Scibelli

With the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association's Board of Directors and the Tournament Management Committee highly engaged in remote meetings on a weekly basis trying to make decisions on the spring season, another body is getting ready to go just in case.

In the springtime, many athletic directors are making their schedules for the fall season, as high school sports usually finalize schedules a season in advance.

But there has been a lot of working going on the past couple of weeks to establish a new schedule for the springtime.

This schedule would focus on using the modified timeline and try and to fit in a 12-game regular season between May 4 and June 12.

The schedule would allow teams to play between two and three contests per week in most team sports. This includes: baseball, softball, boys lacrosse, girls lacrosse, boys tennis, girls tennis, and boys volleyball.

Agawam High School Athletic Director David Stratton, a member of the Pioneer Valley Interscholastic Athletic Association's Executive Board, said there was recently a meeting of the membership to discuss the spring season.

"It was a really good meeting," said Stratton. "We had it remotely with about 40 athletic directors attending."

Stratton said the main point of the meeting with the PVIAC's desire to give student-athletes a spring season, in some modified form.

He did not say if fans would be allowed at games, as of now, but said if school does

resume, a 12-game maximum regular season would be the goal of the PVIAC.

"We want to give these kids a season if we can," said Stratton. "So the athletic directors have begun creating schedules, which have gone to the league and individual sport schedulers to be finalized."

At this point, however, it could be all for nothing. Despite that, the athletic directors want to be ready in the event they are allowed to hold sports.

"Right now, we really don't know," said Stratton. "This entire exercise (making a modified schedule) could be a futile exercise."

Stratton said under the current format the MIAA has agreed to, spring sports could open up on May 4 for practices with contests able to start on May 11. There would be five weeks of a regular season, down from the usual eight-week regular campaign.

The MIAA and the TMC have also agreed there is not enough time in the contract school year to hold a state tournament, so the sectional tournaments will be the only ones held if the season is able to start.

Gov. Charlie Baker has mandated schools remain close until May 4. The commonwealth is currently in a time period being coined as a "surge" for coronavirus cases, though there have been national signs the social distancing and stay-at-home advisories are being effective. The TMC was scheduled to meet this week to continue discussions about how a tournament held in late June will look, but may not have the ability to make any new decisions until the state government issues updated guidance on school events.



Paul Thompson, a member of the 2019-2020 Springfield Thunderbird was recently named IOA/American Specialty AHL Man of the Year.

Submitted photos

Thompson named Specialty Man of the Year for Thunderbirds

The Springfield Thunderbirds are proud to announce that Paul Thompson has been named the team's winner of the IOA/American Specialty AHL Man of the Year award for his outstanding contributions to the Springfield community during the 2019-20 season.

In his third season as a Thunderbird and his second as team captain, the New England native has continued to show his commitment to the community beyond the ice surface.

Before the 2019-20 season began, Thompson was a regular sight at a number of off-season functions, including the Thunderbirds' Street Hockey Tournament, which was

born following the untimely passing of a young local hockey player, Alex Blais, two summers ago. Thompson also gave back to the youth hockey community of Western Mass., start-

ing and running the Paul Thompson Hockey Camp out of MassConn United for beginning hockey players.

In the month of November, in advance of the club's second annual Hockey Fights Cancer Night, Thompson lent his hand to share a deeply personal story to aid a cause near and dear to his family – his cousin Angela's cancer battle and #AngelasArmy initiative. Angela's Army makes "care packages" for patients undergoing cancer treatment, and was born out of Angela's desire to assist other patients, providing comfort to them even as she was going through her own battle.

In addition to participating in a number of team events, one that shined through the most was during the holiday season. Along with teammates Ethan Prow, Rob O'Gara and Tommy Cross,

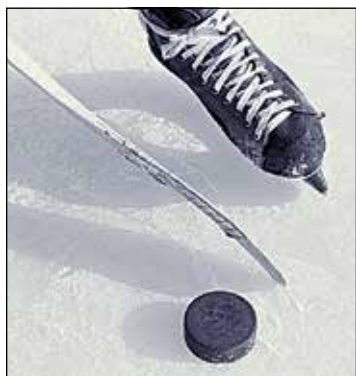


Thompson led a selfless journey to brighten the lives of a mother and two young children who suddenly had to endure the passing of their father just weeks before the Christmas holiday. The captain and his teammates spent hundreds of dollars on toys and essential items to make the family feel special during their most trying time. The story was documented by Western Mass News and can be seen: here

Thompson is now one of 31 finalists for the AHL's 2019-20 Yanick Dupre Memorial Award, honoring the overall IOA/American Specialty AHL Man of the Year. The league award is named after the former Hershey Bears forward and AHL All-Star who died in 1997 following a 16-month battle with leukemia. The winner of the Yanick Dupre Memorial Award will be announced by the American Hockey League at a later date.



Hockey minor league remains suspended through end of April



SPRINGFIELD – The American Hockey League has advised its clubs that the indefinite suspension of AHL play will not be lifted before May.

The League is recommending that teams facilitate the return of AHL players to their primary residences.

It is still up in the air if most professional sports will resume seasons or even play at all in the case of Major League

Baseball. The National Hockey League, and its minor league affiliates in the American Hockey League were nearing the end of their regular season and the Stanley Cup Playoffs would have begun earlier this week. Similarly, the American Hockey League would have started the Calder Cup Playoffs.

Springfield was not a part of the playoff picture last year, but was in contention for a

playoff spot before play was stopped in the middle of last month.

Springfield's play was dipping a bit, but the Thunderbirds were just a few games out of contention in the Atlantic Division. Springfield is 31-27 this year with three overtime losses (good for one point), and no shootout losses this season. That's a 65-point season for Springfield, though it trails

fourth place Hartford by eight points.

There has been no word on when play could resume. The most recent word from the AHL advising players to stay in their homes came on March 16. It's also unclear the AHL would play out its regular season and then the playoffs, or go straight to the playoffs. The same scenarios are being weighed by the NHL and NBA.

Athlete gives back during virus pandemic

WESTFIELD – With the NCAA spring sports seasons KO’d by the COVID-19 pandemic, Westfield State junior softball outfielder Sarah Meunier (Deerfield, Mass./Frontier) has repurposed her time in a positive way – making cloth facemasks for family, friends and others who wish to wear them to help prevent the spread of the virus.

“The masks I am making are not N-95 masks, which are preferred by healthcare workers,” said Meunier. “N-95 masks can’t be made at home, but the ones I am making are a good alternative when the N-95 masks are not available.”

The CDC recently released recommendations on their website that the ‘CDC recommends wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain (e.g., grocery stores and pharmacies) especially in areas of significant community-based transmission.’

Majoring in movement science with a health science double-major, Meunier plans to attend a physician’s assistant program after completing her undergraduate degree.

“My grandmother volunteers at the hospital, that’s probably how it started,” said Meunier of her interest in the healthcare field.

“I’m taking ‘Medical Ethics’ as a class right now with professor Sladyk, and we all needed to come up with projects that we could do ourselves, and I asked her about the masks and she approved of it,” said Meunier.

“I’m really re-learning to sew again in the process. I used to do it more when I was younger. The first few masks took a few tries. I had worked on some comfort quilts with my grandmother in the past.”

“I don’t really have a goal on how many I’ll make,” said Meunier, who said she’s probably made 100 so far, and is now starting to make smaller sizes for children.

“We had a team Zoom meeting, and she was cutting out fabric while we talked,” said Westfield State softball coach Colleen Bannister. “It’s just another way she can give of herself,” noting that Meunier gave several of the masks to Bannister for her elderly parents to use.

“Sarah loves community service and understands that it feels good to give. Anything that our team does with community service, she’s in giving 100 percent,” said Bannister.

Meunier volunteers at Baystate Franklin Hospital when she is at home in Deerfield, Mass., and at Baystate Noble Hospital in Westfield while she’s

at school. She’s filled a variety of roles at the two hospitals, but said her favorite is that of ‘baby cuddler’ at Franklin, helping monitor some of the newborn babies.

While Westfield State has moved all classes to on-line and alternative delivery for the spring, Meunier said she is handling the break from campus, and the social distancing directives well. “It’s good. I’m very schedule oriented, I manage my time pretty well, and take pride in doing that. The time that I’m not spending studying I’m using to make masks, work out and practice.”

“She loves making things happen behind the scenes,” said Bannister. “She really inspired more teammates to work out before preseason so that the team came into the year in better shape this year.”

As a softball player, “Sarah just kept working and working, and her swing was so natural, we had to find a place in the field for her to play,” said Bannister. We knew she wasn’t going to be a shortstop for us, but we needed to reward her hard work with playing time, and she really worked at playing left field.”

Meunier hit .333 with two home runs, five doubles, and 18 RBI as a sophomore in 2019. She stood out in conference play where she batted .471 with five

doubles and 15 RBI in 13 league contests before being named second-team all-Massachusetts State Collegiate Athletic Conference.

Meunier says she misses the routine of playing softball a lot.

“It’s hard going from playing every day in the spring to not at all,” she said. “It’s a beautiful day outside today and I’d expect to be outside for softball. It was sad coming home from Florida.” The Owls’ annual spring 10-game trip was cut short by the COVID-19 pandemic.

“I’m lucky that around my home there are some good loops for walking and running, and some trails for hiking. I have a bow net and brought my bat home, so I have been able to work on hitting a little, and my sister used to play softball so she will throw with me.”

Meunier said that Westfield State’s physician’s assistant program will be her first choice. She plans to pursue a gap year after graduation to work in the medical field to accumulate the working hours necessary for admission to the program. She hopes to start working as a CNA this summer.

“I just want to work to contribute, I want to help be there for people,” said Meunier. “I don’t like to stand by watching.”

Sign-ups ongoing for Quabbin League

The Quabbin Valley Over-30 Baseball League is seeking new players for 2020 season. The league has six teams, several with open roster spots. Last year, the league voted to allow players age 28 and 29 to be able to join the league, though players under 30 are not eligible to pitch. The cost of the league this season is \$192. For returning players, sign-ups are extended through May 1. New players can also sign up through this date with the draft currently set for May

2. The league hopes to begin play in early June. The season is 15 regular season games plus at least one playoff game. A modified schedule is being worked on by league officials. Games are nine innings and metal (BBCOR -3) or wood bats are allowed. Fields locations are throughout Western Mass. For more information on the league, or if you are interested in registering, go to <https://www.quabbin-valleybaseball.org/>. The league is also in Facebook.

Valley Wheel looking for new players

The Valley Wheel Over-30 Baseball League is seeking new players for the upcoming 2020 season. The league is seeking players ages 28 and up. Players turning 28 this year are eligible. However, only players 30 and older can pitch. The league plays 15 regular season games with games being held mostly on Sundays with a couple of weekday games thrown in the mix as well as a special Mother’s Day Saturday game in early May. However, due to the current circumstances, the league schedule has been pushed back. The league still

plans to play its season once bans on gatherings are lifted. The league is built on comradery, fair play, and having a good time with friends. If interested in trying out, go to www.valleywheelbaseball.com. The rules of the league and new player forms can be found on the site. For further information, you can contact the league’s commissioner, Jim Nason at wheel12@comcast.net or call him at (413) 433-4308. Tryouts will be taking place in the early weeks of April, weather permitting, with a draft following the tryouts.

First Monadnock event set for May 9

Due to the coronavirus outbreak and based on the orders by New Hampshire state officials, the Tri-Track Open Modified Series and NHSTRA events at Monadnock Speedway are postponed through at least May 4. According to the speedway’s website, the offices are also closed until at least May 4, but staff of the office are checking email and mes-

sages every day. Currently, the season is set to open on Saturday, May 9 with a full slate of events, including: 100-lap Tri Track Modified Series, NHSTRA modifieds, late model sportsman, street stocks, mini-stocks, pure stocks and young guns. It is unknown whether speedway events will be open to the public when they resume.

How to contact The Holyoke Sun’s Sports Editor

Have the scoop on a local sports story? Want to submit a team photo, pass along a potential story idea, or just find out how to get a copy of that great photo of your young athlete? Please send all sports-related press releases and information to Sports Editor Greg Scibelli at: sports@turley.com or call, 1-413-283-8393.



► In The News

Cannabis retailers make case for recreational sales as ‘essential’

By Dalton Zbierski
dzbierski@turley.com

And just like that, it’s gone.

In the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, Gov. Charlie Baker has opted to indefinitely halt the sale of recreational adult use marijuana, designating the industry as a non-essential. Medical sales are permitted, and dispensaries can still serve cardholders, but the cannabis community is critical of Baker’s decision regarding recreational sales.

“There’s a lot of questions right now around the importance of adult use as an essential service,” said Amanda Rositano, president of NETA, a leading cannabis retailer operating out of Northampton and Brookline. “We have seen that many [recreational marijuana] customers are raising this question of as to why package stores are considered essential, why pharmacies are considered essential, grocery stores are considered essential, but adult-use cannabis is not.”

There’s a reason that leaders of the cannabis industry are voicing disapproval.

Without recreational marijuana, consumers will be likely return to buying “unregulated, illicit market products.”

Beyond those concerns, Rositano outlined a bigger problem.

“It’s important to understand that many of our customers that are coming in to purchase adult-use cannabis are doing so to provide themselves with relief for medical conditions,” she said. “Many symptoms are exacerbated by the Covid-19 crisis, whether that’s anxiety, pain, sleeplessness; it’s a really important product for many people.”

NETA has shifted to the “reserve ahead” model to best ensure the safety of medical patrons and dispensary employees. Customers order in advance, and the medical marijuana is ready upon arrival.

Rositano credits the state’s Cannabis Control Commission for quickly implementing changes that have enhanced the safety and speed of transactions, essentially allowing dispensaries to stay on their feet. Theory Wellness is a recreational marijuana dispensary that operates recreational retail facilities in

Chicopee and Great Barrington. Each location offers pre-order and curbside pickup.

Thomas Winstanley, the director of marketing at Theory Wellness, noted that it’s imperative that all dispensaries prioritize safety. In the midst of the outbreak, he explained why customers can still trust the marijuana that is distributed at dispensaries.

“First and foremost, you have to realize that when somebody actually touches that flower that they buy at our store, they’re the first human hands to touch that product. Every step of our cultivation process all the way until the front-end retail, nobody’s handling or touching the product,” said Winstanley.

NETA and Theory Wellness are following CDC protocols and have implemented social distancing guidelines to protect employees and customers. Both operations are engaged in frequent discussions with their host communities.

Rosita complimented the cannabis community, noting that it has “really banded together not only to operate

safely in this environment but to share best practices and really ensure that we’re setting a standard for not just individual operators but for the industry as a whole.”

Both dispensaries are collaborating with members of the Massachusetts Cannabis Business Association in a joint effort to produce hand sanitizer for front-line medical personnel.

“We are voluntarily producing and donating thousands of gallons of hand sanitizer in our production facilities with permission from the state to be able to donate that product to medical facilities across the state,” said Rositano.

Watching industry rivals band together for a common cause, Winstanley praised the bonds that have been forged between different in-state dispensaries.

“One of the positives if were some silver lining in all of this is that it’s bringing people together to help support one another. I think that’s what we need,” he said. “We all know that we’re all in this together, and that’s a sentiment that we haven’t quite had at this level. We’re seeing it now.”

Child specialist offers tips for staying home

Baystate Health recently shared ideas for parents to ensure their children are continuing to learn and develop, while also fitting in much needed time for play, expression and physical activities, as schools and daycares remain closed during the coronavirus pandemic.

"There are many ways to approach the plan for how to support kids while they aren't attending daycare or school in a traditional way," said Jessica Hagerman, child life specialist and manager of Child Life & Healing Arts at Baystate Children's Hospital in Springfield. "Parents know their children best and there isn't necessarily a 'one size fits all' plan that will work for every child and family. It's helpful to consider all of the aspects that make a child who they are, including their age, development, educational needs, learning style, interests, energy level, and ability to focus. These may all contribute towards figuring out the best plan that will meet their needs."

Parents may want to consider creating a routine for some sense of normalcy and to keep the home environment somewhat predictable during these unpredictable times.

"Children may feel a lack of control with all that's going on around them, so it's also a great idea to include them in some of the decision-making, and to give choices about activities and plans when appropriate," said Hagerman. "Staying connected with their school to understand what resources may be available and their requirements for keeping up with academics should certainly be a part of the plan, but this may also be a great time to create some extra fun, memorable experiences in hopes that children as well as parents will look back on this time in a positive way."

There are so many great online resources available to families with ideas for games, activities and suggestions to keep children occupied and learning during this social isolation period and beyond, noted the child life specialist.

"A simple search will bring up a wealth of resources and ideas," she said. "We also encourage families to find a healthy balance between screen time and screen-free activities. While there is so much to do and learn in the digital world, moderation is important to ensure children are also still engaging in other activities to support their overall development. When children are actively playing and creatively engaging in their environment, it can support their development in incredibly positive ways."

She noted this is not an easy time for some parents, many of whom may be juggling being home with their children while still trying to work from home, or who may be trying to coordinate the many aspects of life that are affected by this pandemic.

"Sometimes screen time may be the one thing that keeps your child content while you sign into that conference call. Being aware of what your kids are accessing when they are on the screen can make all the difference," said Hagerman.

She also encouraged fresh air and exercise, and noted that social isolation doesn't have to mean staying inside — but that it does mean that parents should be responsible when family members are outside.

"Avoiding public playgrounds and 'high-touch' areas like climbing structures, or places where others may congregate, is really important for health and safety during this pandemic," Hagerman said. "If you don't have a yard or an isolated outdoor space to play, going for walks or riding bikes in areas where you can keep a safe distance from anyone other than those you live with is a good way to still get out and moving. It's a good idea to be prepared with hand wipes or sanitizer for any little hands that like to



touch everything."

Other outdoor activity ideas may include: creating a chalk obstacle course, treasure hunts, hula-hoop races, planting a garden, having a picnic, or blowing bubbles. More details for how to do these are only an Internet search away, she noted.

For indoor activities, there are always the classics like board games, card games, puzzles, arts and crafts and movie nights.

"You may also have some home improvement projects around the house for kids who are old enough to help," she said. "This may be a great time to clean out that old toy chest, sort through your bookshelf, organize the Tupperware drawer, or put away winter clothes."

The Baystate child life specialist noted that now may also be a great time to create a family time capsule. You can download a free copy of "My Covid-19 Time Capsule," created by Natalie Long of Long Creations, at letsembark.ca/time-capsule.

"In five, 10, or 20 years from now, you can look back at how you and your family made it through all of the Covid-19 changes," said Hagerman.

The Baystate Children's Hospital child life specialist offers the following websites for some additional experiences to consider:

- www.weareteachers.com/best-virtual-field-trips
- www.kennedy-center.org/education/mo-willems
- momypoppins.com/kids/50-easy-science-experiments-for-kids-fun-educational-activities-using-household-stuff

For more information on the coronavirus, visit baystatehealth.org/covid19 or search for Baystate Health or Baystate Children's Hospital on social media.

Infants

Activities for babies up to 12 months include the following:

Read a book: Your infant loves to hear your voice.

Sing a song: Babies love soft rhythms and tunes.

Peek-a-boo: Babies love to see their family's faces appear and disappear behind their hands.

Tummy time: Babies can build muscle strength by spending time on their stomach. Parents should always supervise their baby while on their tummy. They should give the baby something to look at or explore while doing tummy time.

Go for a walk: If the weather is nice, fresh air is great for a baby. Be sure to stay 6 feet away from others and don't let other people touch the baby or stroller.

Toddlers

Ideas for children 1-2 years old include:

Pots and pans band: Take out the kitchenware and let the kids create their own music with wooden spoons.

Sorting and stacking: Toddlers love to sort and stack. Find a muffin tin and an assortment of trinkets for them to sort in to each section, or blocks, cups, or Tupperware containers that they can stack and build.

Dance party: Toddlers love to dance. Parents can put on some music and dance with their toddler. They could even mimic the child's moves for their own exercise similar to James Corden's Toddlerography on "The Late Late Show."

No-mess painting: Drop dots of paint on a piece of paper or canvas. Then cover with plastic wrap and tape the edges well. Let the toddler push the paint around, creating a no-mess piece of art! Parents can also let them get messy and finger-paint, if they'd like.

Animal mimicking: Shout out an animal and have the toddler make the noise and pretend to be that animal. It helps them learn, exercise and create. Parents can help their child act out being a dog, a fish, or an elephant.

Preschoolers

Children ages 3-5 may like these activities:

Backwards Day: Have mac and cheese for breakfast, then do the whole day in reverse, letting kids wear their clothes backwards, and end with pancakes for dinner.

Build a fort: Use blankets, towels, pillows, and stuffed animal from around the house to build an awesome fort where kids can pretend to be explorers, watch a movie, or read a book.

Build a zoo: Using blocks, boxes, or household items, create habitats for the child's stuffed animals. Kids can decorate each exhibit with coloring pages and make up names and backstories for their animals.

Look and find: Look around and find an item in the room. Ask the child if he or she can find the item. Parents can make it easy or challenging. Set a timer and challenge each other.

Shadow coloring: On a sunny day, line up the child's favorite toys in the sun. Trace the shadows onto paper and then color in the images. This works well with cars, Lego figures, dinosaurs, dolls, stuffed animals ... anything that makes a shadow.

Elementary

Schoolchildren, ages 6-10, will have remote learning assignments from

school, but also may appreciate these family activities:

Scavenger hunt: Parents can create a list of items that can be found in their home or yard. Set a timer and see which child can find the most the fastest.

Sidewalk chalk competition: Yell out an object, animal, or image and let the kids try to draw it on the driveway. For rainy days, use paper and markers indoors.

Have a special family dinner: Put a tablecloth or sheet on the table, have everyone dress up in their best outfits, use the good silverware and have a fancy dinner together.

Science and slime: Look up recipes that can be made at home for slime, cloud slime, molding dough, oobleck, etc. Kids love to mix the ingredients and use their creativity. Baystate has its own recipe: Mix 5 oz. school glue, ½ tsp. of baking soda, 2 tsp. of contact solution, add a small amount of food coloring or acrylic paint for color. Consider adding shaving cream for "fluffy slime" and experimenting with adding small items like beads, glitter or other trinkets to provide texture.

Create your own game: Have kids make up their own board game, card games, sports, or challenges. Be sure to have instructions and rules.

Tweens

Children aged 11-13 may enjoy taking a break from their schoolwork for some of these fun activities:

Chopped junior cooking challenge: Parents can give their children two or three ingredients that they must use in their dish. Parents should be sure to supervise their kids in the kitchen, especially with knives and the oven.

Try a TikTok: Have the child teach his or her parents a popular TikTok dance. Even if the parent is not good at dancing or feels embarrassed, it will make the child feel good to teach something that he or she loves.

Connect with friends online: Children can use free apps like House Party to video chat with friends, but can also play games like Heads Up and Pictionary through the app.

Dress-Up Apples to Apples: Similar to the card game, challenge the children to pick out an outfit for a specific event: concert, school, skiing, beach day, etc. Set a timer and have the kids race to their rooms and select an appropriate outfit. Judge who picked the best one. The winner picks the next category. Parents should make sure the kids know they have to fold and put away all of their clothes at the end of the game.

Recreate childhood photos: Go through old photos, in print or digitally, to pick out some of the family's favorites. Try to recreate the image using props, the same family members, and poses. This will be a fun trip down memory lane and is guaranteed to bring the laughs.

Teens

Teenagers, 14 and up, can use the time at home for self-improvement and to exercise their creativity. Some activities that may catch their interest are:

Learn a new skill: Use YouTube.com or online resources to learn how to sew, code, play an instrument or cook.

Drawing/writing: Teens can look up writing and drawing prompts online and see where their creativity takes them.

Pokemon Go or Wizards Unite: Augmented reality games can be played outside from a safe distance from others, or even from the car. For those playing in the car, parents should make sure there's a designated driver who has eyes on the road and is not engaged in the game.

Exercise: Teens can practice skills from their favorite sport or try classes online, like yoga or Zumba.

Learn a new language: Rosetta Stone is offering free courses.

BENEFIT, from page 1

resources and expertise.

“We looked at different things. For example, we looked at, and made some prototypes of, face shields. None of our capabilities were really well suited to that. A lot of people are working on face shields, thank goodness, and have materials better suited for the task,” Hazen explained. “Ultimately, hand sanitizer fell most within our wheelhouse. That’s mainly because a part of our business is working with bulk quantities of ethanol and other coatings and adhesives.”

Ethanol, which is the most common compound used at Hazen Paper for coating, is also a main component of hand sanitizer. The Hazen Paper team worked together to figure out how to make the sanitizer, what materials would be needed and how to navigate World Health Organization and Food and Drug Administration regulations.

“Because we work with ethanol and other chemicals, we’re very familiar with the EPA and DEP regulations on a routine basis,” Hazen said. “We’re not as accustomed to the FDA regulations ... it’s not part of our daily routine and system, so to speak.”

After concluding face masks were not suited to the company’s strengths, Feigen and his team at Walter Drake put their custom thermoform packaging skills into designing a face shield prototype and the tools needed to build it.

“The quantities [of face masks] wouldn’t be significant on a national basis; the quality could potentially be a challenge,” Feigen said. “Face shields weren’t talked about in the first week, but then it became obvious that is something that is very directly applicable to what we do.”

He continued, “What we did was we brought in our people and we brainstormed a couple of prototypes and then landed on one that we thought met the requirements of the healthcare system and was most efficient for us to do. That left us with our desired prototype. In an environment that normally takes three or four or five weeks, in four days we built tooling to do what the face shield looks like.”

Both companies have been dealing with the difficulties of restocking supplies during the shutdown. Feigen said that one of the goals during the design of the face shield was to make something that would utilize stockpiles already available in the building, so they would not be dependent on outside resources.

“You go to war with what you have, not with what you want to have,” Feigen said. “We looked around, what do we have in stock on our floors that we can use to make something.”

Hazen added that the biggest hurdle they’ve encountered is securing bottles

for the hand sanitizer.

“Everything is in such a desperation and hoarding mode, where you take a chance and grab a lot and either it doesn’t show up, or when it does show up, it has the wrong spout for the wrong body,” he said. “What we’re trying to do is get into a mode with the city, if possible, where we can take empty bottles back, sanitize them, and recycle them. That’s the goal at any rate.”

To help solve some of the bottling issues, Hazen partnered with Peter Sternerup and Silver Bear Distillery in Dalton. Their combined efforts have led to thousands of bottles of hand sanitizer being donated to the city of Holyoke and others in need. Hazen said the company has invested about \$25,000 since the start of March to get their new production up and running.

“Every day we try to do more. We are in production here, we make some label-grade materials that get used in pharmaceutical label and medical product label, so we’ve been able to keep our employees actively employed,” he said. “Then we’re dealing with sort of the challenge of keeping everybody safe while they’re here. ... We’ve been fortunate that at this point, knock on wood, none of our active employees have been sick with Covid.”

Walter Drake has taken a national approach to its donations. Feigen said they have been following the news and taking advantage of state resources to see where the hotspots for highest needs are, identifying hospital chains, nursing homes, and the states to determine where the face shields are needed most and send them there,

“We wanted to help the people that were having a problem,” he said.

Over the past two weeks, nearly 200 bottles of hand sanitizer have been delivered to Holyoke from Hazen Paper. The efforts of local companies to help combat Covid-19 are more important than ever, following the devastating outbreak at the Holyoke Soldiers’ Home earlier this month. To date, 44 veteran residents have died, 38 with positive tests for coronavirus. A total of 99 residents have tested positive, 76 tested negative, with three pending. Out of 300 employee tests, 79 have been positive.

As investigations into what happened at the facility are ongoing and the Soldiers’ Home continues to operate under new leadership, the state Department of Public Health recently delivered 50,000 surgical masks and 1,000 gowns to the facility. The nursing and infection control teams continue to provide oversight, including updating signage throughout the facility and educating staff on the proper use of PPE and infection control measures while supporting the emotional wellbeing of veteran residents.

AAA supports first responders, health care providers with roadside assistance

In an effort to support our local first responders and front-line health care providers, AAA Pioneer Valley will provide them roadside assistance free of charge through April 30th.

AAA will provide the following services:

- Waive fuel delivery fee
- Cover the first \$100 of locksmith service
- Provide an additional \$10 discount off price of battery for AAA Members
- Waive hookup and/or mileage fees
- Waive charge for the first hour of extrication service

First responders and front-line health care providers, whether members or non-members are asked to identify themselves during their call and provide the proper credentials such as I.D. badge or other identification when the service provider arrives, and these fees will not be collected. The exception will

be for battery replacement charges. To help with social distancing, AAA will also return the vehicle after repairs are made.

AAA would like to thank the many first responders and healthcare professionals who are assisting our communities during this crisis. This is a small way we can show our appreciation.

For more information please visit AAA.com/COVID-19 or the AAA Pioneer Valley Facebook page. To contact us for service or assistance with any AAA product or service please call us at 413-785-1381. Our doors may be closed but the great majority of our services are available and our employees stand ready to assist.

AAA Pioneer Valley is a not-for-profit auto club with 6 offices in Franklin, Hampden, Hampshire counties of Massachusetts providing more than 200,000 local AAA members with travel, insurance,



Hazen Paper, now making hand sanitizer with ethanol it usually uses for adhesives, is on South Water Street in Holyoke.
Photo by Peter Spotts



Walter Drake Inc. on Sargeant Street in Holyoke is making face shields.
Photo by Peter Spotts



The Corona Shield, designed by Holyoke-based Walter Drake Inc., is being distributed to hospitals and nursing homes across the country.
Submitted photo

HEALTH, from page 1

“Most of us can relate to feeling ‘cooped up,’ these days,” said Karin Jeffers, a licensed mental health counselor and president and CEO of Clinical & Support Options, a Northampton-based nonprofit behavioral health agency. “For some, though, this crisis evokes some pretty intense feelings and anxiety.”

For routine mental health amidst current social distancing protocols order, Jeffers, CSO and Levine offer up a number of broad suggestions:

Know the facts: “It’s easy to spend too much time watching cable news, which is often geared more toward entertainment than information,” Jeffers says. “And social media is often riddled with rumor and ‘not-quite-true’ statements. Find reliable sources of information, like the Centers for Disease Control or the World Health Organization.”

Limit social media: “It’s easy to get ‘sucked in’ to the feedback loop of social media platforms,” Jeffers advises. “Be mindful of your feelings when checking into these online environments.” It is important that children and teenagers “not sleep until noon” and limit screen time when possible, according to Levine.

Keep a routine: “Another factor is trying to maintain some sense of a routine,” said Levine. “What that routine looks like is obviously individual; it does

not need to mean that it’s filled with to-do’s because right now people need to allow themselves a little bit of space to breathe and take in what’s happening.”

Seek support and connection: Preserving relationships is essential as well. Whether it’s through text, over the phone, online or by mail, communication is key. “Another thing that speaks to managing anxiety is to be reaching out to other people in need or other people who may be isolated,” Levine said. “It really is critical to good mental health. If you’re only focused on yourself, you’re going to get caught up in your worries. The ability to think about others is great for them but also great for you.”

Do fun things: “Make time for activities that make you feel better,” Jeffers says, “whether that’s watching movies, doing arts and crafts, reading, praying, meditating, or exercising.”

Recognize loneliness: “Loneliness, fear, boredom — these are normal reactions,” Jeffers notes. “Try to re-focus on positive situations and positive activities.”

Modify activities: “Listen to your feelings and give yourself breaks from a situation if you need to,” Jeffers says. “Shift your expectations and priorities. Don’t be afraid to re-focus on what gives you meaning, fulfillment or purpose.”

Reach out for help: “If you need help, it’s available,” Jeffers said. “Most

agencies are offering telehealth, and no special equipment is needed.”

CSO

“The temporary telehealth expansion has truly been a lifeline for so many people,” Jeffers said. “Not only are existing clients able to keep their appointments by phone, but new clients can reach out without fear of exposure to the coronavirus.”

Clinical & Support Options fully expects there to be a rise in new clients in the coming weeks and months.

“Many people are feeling varying degrees of anxiety and worry right now,” Jeffers said. “It’s very important people know where to get help — and that it’s only a phone call away.”

Jeffers adds that even intake procedures for new clients seeking treatment during the crisis can be completed remotely.

Clinical & Support Options has 16 locations across Western Massachusetts, including five “open access” clinics (Springfield, Pittsfield, Northampton, Greenfield, Gardner and Athol) and three Crisis/Respite centers (Northampton, Greenfield, and Athol). To schedule an appointment, call a local CSO location (csoinc.org/locations) or be directed by calling the main office at 413-774-1314.

BHN

To respond to the need for social dis-

tancing as well as the increase in stress and behavioral health challenges during the Covid-19 crisis, BHN is transitioning service at its 10 counseling and outpatient clinics to remote therapy, providing services via virtual sessions, seven days a week.

The behavioral service provider has recently launched BHNTeleCare, which allows individuals to continue counseling sessions with their therapists from the comfort and safety of their own homes.

For those without access to phone or video technology, BHN’s physical outpatient clinics are operating limited hours to continue providing in-person services during this crisis.

According to Katherine Wilson, president and CEO of BHN, “This innovation in the way we provide therapy and counseling services is groundbreaking and allows us to render services where people are. This is particularly critical as a result of the needs that have emerged due to the spread of Covid-19. It allows a counseling avenue for those suffering with anxiety and in need of support during this time of crisis affecting individuals and families.”

People can call 413-BHN-WORKS to both learn more and to schedule an appointment with a therapist.

BHN has locations include Springfield, Ware, Northampton, Holyoke and Westfield.

City offices, library, Senior Center remain closed

Holyoke’s city government is still operating, with the notable exceptions of the library and Senior Center, and with other departments adapting their services to limit personal interaction with the public.

City Hall and other municipal buildings are closed to the public. Residents with business at city offices are asked to call or email the relevant department first, or take advantage of online services at www.holyoke.org. If the department staff determine that the request cannot be handled by telephone or email, the resident may be able to visit the office by appointment only.

Police, fire and ambulance service will continue to be fully staffed. In the event of an emergency, residents can dial 9-1-1.

Trash and recycling pickups will continue as usual. The Holyoke Public Library will remain closed

until further notice. Due dates will be extended, and overdue fines will be waived when the library reopens. For more information, and for online resources that will remain active while the library building is closed, visit www.holyokelibrary.org.

The Senior Center is closed. Those who depended on meals at the Senior Center are encouraged to contact WestMass ElderCare, at 413-538-9020, to sign up for the Meal on Wheels program. Seniors in need of assistance during this time are encouraged to call 413-322-5625. Messages will be checked.

Utility services are running as usual, but the Holyoke Gas & Electric offices are closed to the public. Customer service is still available during weekday business hours at 413-536-9300 and by email. Bills can be paid over the phone or online at www.hged.com.

Public Notices

Commonwealth of
Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Hampden Division
50 State Street
Springfield, MA 01103
(413)748-8600
Docket No. HD20P0600EA
Estate of:
Debra A. Morsen
Date of Death:
February 16, 2020
INFORMAL PROBATE
PUBLICATION NOTICE
To all persons interested
in the above captioned estate,
by Petition of Petitioner
Melissa Rojas of Granby,
MA.

Melissa Rojas of
Granby, MA has been informally
appointed as the
Personal Representative of
the estate to serve without
surety on the bond.
The estate is being

administered under informal
procedure by the Personal
Representative under the
Massachusetts Uniform
Probate Code without supervision
by the Court. Inventory
and accounts are not required
to be filed with the Court, but
interested parties are entitled
to notice regarding the administration
from the Personal
Representative and can petition
the Court in any matter
relating to the estate, including
distribution of assets and
expenses of administration.
Interested parties are entitled
to petition the Court to institute
formal proceedings and
to obtain orders terminating
or restricting the powers of
Personal Representatives
appointed under informal
procedure. A copy of the Petition
and Will, if any, can be
obtained from the Petitioner.
4/17/2020

Holyoke Arrests

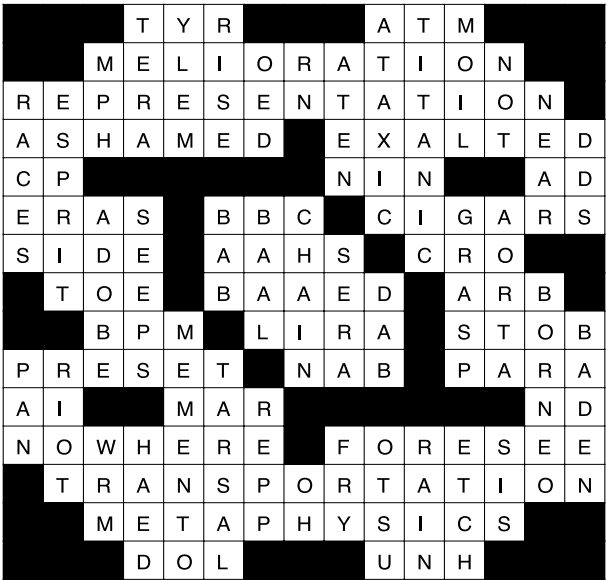
The Holyoke Police Department’s arrest log for April 6-12 was not available at press time.

HOW TO SUBMIT PUBLIC NOTICES

All public notices to be published in the Holyoke Sun should be sent directly to notices@turley.com. Jamie Joslyn processes all public notices for this newspaper and can answer all of your questions regarding these notices. Please indicate the newspapers and publication date(s) for the notice(s) in the subject line of your email. For questions regarding coverage area, procedures or cost, please call Jamie directly at 413-283-8393.

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Please check the accuracy of your public notice prior to submission (i.e., date, time, spelling). Also, be sure the requested publication date coincides with the purpose of the notice, or as the law demands. Thank you.



The Sun
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The other is a **Paid Obituary**, costing \$120, which allows families to publish extended death notice information of their own choice and may include a photograph. **Death Notices & Paid Obituaries** should be submitted through a funeral home to: obits@turley.com.

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Public notice deadlines are Mondays at noon, Fridays noon for Monday holidays.

visit www.publicnotices.turley.com



Social distancing has meant decline in child abuse reports

'Perfect storm' feared during Child Abuse Prevention Month

Child advocates are worried that the coronavirus pandemic around the world is the perfect storm for creating another pandemic at home, one of child abuse that affects one of the most vulnerable populations: children.

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month, designed to raise awareness of child abuse and neglect. This year, Child Abuse Prevention Month is coming in the middle of a coronavirus pandemic keeping children away from trusted adults outside the family who can report on suspected abuse.

According to a report on NBC News, hotlines in Colorado, Texas, Illinois and California have received fewer reports of child abuse since stay-at-home orders have been put into place.

"So far, we are seeing a decrease in child abuse reports nationally. We don't know if this is because people are rallying in a storm or because cases are 'socially isolating' and never being recognized or reported," said Dr. Stephen Boos, medical director at the Baystate Family Advocacy Center in Springfield. "One thing we do know is that the health, social and economic consequences of this pandemic are

hugely stressful. Stress combined with being locked in the house together is a great breeding ground for emotional and physical abuse."

NBC also reported that teachers, coaches and health care professionals, people trained to recognize child abuse, "are just not seeing these kids," said Daphne Young, chief communications officer for Childhelp, a child-welfare organization with a national abuse hotline. Unlike other hotlines, Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline has seen a 23 percent increase in calls and a 263 percent increase in texts compared to March 2019. With in-person operations limited at child protective services and other government agencies, children and teens have been texting the hotline themselves from unsafe homes.

Children are shut in with families whose members all are bored, frightened and dealing with change and uncertainty, Boos notes.

He suggests three proven ways to prevent child abuse and increase children's resilience. Three elements of the "Strengthening Families Approach" are easily adapted to the current crisis — social connectedness, practical help in times of need and knowledge of parenting and child development.

"We are supported and sustained by

our relationship with others. We need to find ways to connect ourselves for sanity while isolating ourselves for safety," Boos said about being socially connected.

He suggests scheduling time during the day for phone calls, video chats, neighborly talks over the fence and walks in the woods, all while keeping groups small and maintaining at least 6 feet of separation between others.

Practical help also matters, whether it is a government check, someone dropping off groceries at the door or lending a computer or wi-fi connection, or the charity of neighbors.

"Anything that makes it easier to get through the day, and especially something that tells you that your community cares about you, can give you the energy to tolerate one more complaint of boredom or one more tantrum by your child," Boos said.

Yet the hardest of the three elements is upping one's game on parenting at times of stress and serving the role of parent, teacher, daycare provider, and after school activities director, he noted.

"I encourage parents to build a rational schedule for themselves and their children. You should plan for a regular wake-up time, time for schoolwork in modest, tolerable chunks, and rewarding and fun activities including screen time, social con-

necting, exercise, and spiritual or religious meditation. Adults need time to attend to themselves and to renew the primary parent-to-parent relationship. It is also good to schedule limited media time to check on the epidemic and not follow it obsessively from moment to moment," Boos said.

The Baystate pediatrician offered the following encouraging words in these difficult times.

"All of these recommendations are good for normal times, as well," Boos said. "If we can gain these skills, connections and systems through this hard time, they can benefit us when it is all over and serve us when other adversity occurs in the future. When the coronavirus pandemic ends, we will find that the long-term payback was well worth the effort."

Assistance for parents or guardians relating to children during the coronavirus pandemic is available by calling the Parental Stress Line at 800-632-8188, available 24/7 in all languages, or visiting the Massachusetts organization at parentshelpingparents.org. Resources for parents and caregivers to help keep children safe from child sexual abuse are available at stopitnow.org or calling 888-PREVENT.

Reports of suspected abuse can be made to the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families hotline at 800-792-5200.

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Form 1040

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answers for the week of 4/8

9	2	4	7	5	8	6	1	3
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answers for the week of 4/8

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wedding
announcements 

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